



## **SIMPLE GARDENING: HARVESTING TOMATO SEEDS FOR NEXT YEAR'S PLANTING**

This is a great activity if you have some of those tomatoes you brought in to keep from the frost still vine ripening. You don't need many tomatoes as each one has many seeds.

### **MATERIALS:**

- Your favorite tomato varieties that are not hybridized or cross pollinated – heritage varieties are best
- Knife to cut
- Source of running water for rinsing
- Jars
- Rubber bands to fasten covers
- Paper towels to cover jars & clean up
- Strainer or colander (with small enough holes to contain tomato seeds)
- Paper plates or coffee filters to dry on
- Manila envelopes for storage

### **PROCEDURE:**

- First collect a few ripe tomatoes free of cracks or bug holes, don't use double fruits as they could be cross pollinated
- Wash these mother fruits well
- Slice out the middle portion from each, where the biggest, fattest seeds are found
- We will be fermenting ours, you may also try drying or burial in the garden
- You will see each seed is enclosed by a gelatinous sac. The gel contains chemicals which inhibit germination until the seed is secure in the soil.
- You will be cleaning this gel as while storing it can be a haven for seed and soil borne diseases

- Fermentation will clean the seeds
- Mix tomato gel containing the seeds and water in a jar and cover (be sure to use separate jars as well as label for each variety)
- Let sit at room temperature for 24 hours
- Rinse well in a strainer after 24 hours letting the gel slough off
- Dry the seeds on a paper plate for a week or so, until they feel papery and crack if folded in half with tweezers (you can write the name of the variety on the plate)
- You can also let dry on a coffee filter, creating a seed disc
- Place in labeled envelopes for storage over the winter